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HERDER'S CONCEPTION OF THE FOLKSONG AND HIS
INTRODUCTION OF PERCY'S RELIQUES OF
ANCIENT ENGLISH POETRY

BY

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

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AND HIS INTRODUCTION
OF PERCY'S RELIQUES OF ANCIENT ENGLISH POETRY

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German 30B

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HERDER'S CONCEPTION OF THE FOLKSONG
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Literary critics of the 18th century recognized in the folk-song--the naive poetic expression of a peoples' elemental feeling--one of the most important contributions to the annals of human history. In Germany its significance had been lost sight of for some time; it remained for Johann Gottfried Herder to revive the interest in it. He stimulated the desire among the literary men of his time and country for a collection of the existing remnants of songs that cannot die because they contain the immortal heritage of the nation. He himself had been inspired by the old English and Scotch songs and hoped by bringing them to the German people through translation, to again turn their taste to the appreciation of the forceful, serious ballad.

The eighteenth century "Romanze" before Herder had a decided tendency toward the humorous and satirical. This was noticeable in the burlesques of Schiebeler, Löwen and other German contemporary lyric poets, as well as in the "Leyerlieder" of K. F. Schmidt that appeared in 1780. Even as late as 1794 Sulzer in his "Theory of Fine Arts" claimed that the ballad belonged to the comical type of literature. Nevertheless, as early as 1767, M. Christian Schmidt of Giessen in his well-known "Additions to the Theory of Poetry" remarks that to qualify the ballad as necessarily funny was a fast disappearing prejudice. The contributions of Goethe, Bürger, Wieland, Voss,

Claudius, Kosegarten, von Miller, Haug and other poets of the last half of the eighteenth century, all tending toward more serious expression, helped to bring about a decided, though necessarily gradual, change in the ballad, replacing the light and often common "Bänkelsange" by songs of deep feeling and elemental force. The source of inspiration, however, was not found on national soil; it had its origin chiefly in the closely related literature of another land--in the ballads of the British isles.

But the man who more than any other felt the national importance of lyric expression was Johann Gottfried Herder. As a young man, seeking for the origin of poetry, he thought to have found it in the song and the ode; pondering upon the nature of the ode he found himself lost in the inquiry about the first beginnings of the art of poetry. The data he gained from the study of the life of Homer, from Hebrew poetry, from Danish history and MacPherson's Fingal, harmonized with his conception of the nature of all poetry: "poetry, the mother tongue of mankind; the mother tongue of all poets--the song." This was for him the key to all poetry. Had he been able to follow it to its utmost consequences, it would have been sure to have become the most important service for the revival of the poetic spirit in Germany. But, serving him as an inspiration to further activity, it did much to guide the German ballad back into the right course from which it had deviated.

Herder thought to perceive in MacPherson's "Ossian" notes of nature and of the heart similar to Homer and Shakespeare, and to

verses in the folksongs of various nations. It matters little that he and others mistook the work of the Scotch poet MacPherson for the songs of Fingal's son who had lived in the third century. MacPherson, making use of old Irish songs, of Scotch verses and legends, and throwing the mystic veil of antiquity about the verses of the legendary Scotch bard, had revived for the people of his own time and for posterity, the naivety, the sentiment, the force that had originally created them. What had been expressed centuries before, voicing in simple words the most vital interests of life, again touched the human heart. Herder recognized that the poetry of Ossian, full of sentiment and musical quality, was destined to release and to reawaken the neglected appreciation of poetry based upon true emotion. With the notes of this poet--"notes of dignity, of innocence, of the activities and blissfulness of human existence" as Herder called them, he succeeded in directing the attention of his contemporaries to that which is truly simple--the artless production of the creative poetic spirit of a people. Firmly believing in the authenticity of Ossian, and placing him on a par with Homer and Shakespeare as a representative of the highest poetic genius he upheld him in all critical literary discussion, regretting only that so much of the beauty of the great bard should have been lost by Denis' inadequate translations into German hexameter. Not that he did not fully appreciate the hexameter of Klopstock, but that he, more fully than anyone else, realized the great difference between the two. He felt that the poems of Ossian, songs of the people--songs of an uneducated people not yet

weaned away from adherence to sense impressions--songs that had continued to be sung by strength of tribal tradition, had undergone a change in this beautiful epic form. That, even though the meaning had remained undisturbed, the tone, the color upon which the beauty of the poem depends so much had been altered.

Herder aimed to prove that poetry and lack of culture are not contrasts, saying that for him a wild people is one that is alive and unrestrained in action; the wilder it is the livelier must be its songs, if it possesses such; consequently the more lyrically inclined. Upon the vital quality of the song, the living presence of the pictures, the coherence of its contents, the symmetry of the words and syllables, the rhythm of the melody depend the marvellous power and continuance of these songs through the centuries. He saw a pronounced similarity between the rhythm of the songs of Ossian and those of the American Indians which also depend on movement, melody and pantomime. He was conscious of the dramatic element in the old songs and pointed out the energy of their action--"Springe und Wurfe" as he called them--proving these statements by examples as well as by psychological explanation. He found their source in the youthful imagination as yet unweakened by abstractions.

A part of a dialogue between mother and son, translated by Herder from the old Scotch song "Edward, Edward" is here quoted. Could anything have been depicted in more gruesome touches in a popular song?

1. "Dein Schwert, wie ist's von Blut so roth?
Edward, Edward!
Dein Schwert wie ist's von Blut so roth
Und gehst so traurig da! - O!
Ich hab geschlagen meinen Geier todt;
Mutter, Mutter!
Ich hab geschlagen meinen Geier todt,
Und das, das geht mir nah! - O!

2. Dein's Geiers Blut ist nicht so roth!
Edward, Edward!
Dein's Geiers Blut ist nicht so roth,
Mein Sohn bekenn mir frey! - O!

* * * *

3. Ich hab geschlagen meinen Vater todt
Mutter, Mutter!

* * * *

4. Und was soll Deine Mutter thun?
Edward, Edward!
Und was soll Deine Mutter thun?
Mein Sohn das sage mir! - O!
Der Fluch der Hölle soll auf Dir ruhn,
Mutter, Mutter!
Der Fluch der Hölle soll auf Euch ruhn,
Denn ihr, ihr riethets mir! - O!

Songs of wild peoples occupy themselves with objects, actions, circumstances--with a living world. Youth sees the phenomena of this world as directly and truly as they really are; the contrast that exists between the youthful and the modern, between nature poetry and the poetry of artificiality was clear to Herder. He believed that the poets of antiquity possessed the assurance and firmness of expression peculiar to the unspoilt children of nature, coupled with dignity, harmony and beauty. He likened Homer's rhapsodies and the songs of Ossian to "impromptus", lamenting that gradually this gift

became weaker until finally developing art extinguishes nature and leaves weakness and artificiality in its place-- "Die Dicht Kunst, die sturmendste, sicherste Tochter der menschlichen Seele, ward die ungewisseste, lahmste, wankenste."

In the essay entitled "Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker" Herder expressed in detail the views indicated above and also touches upon the German Volkslied, thus giving the question a practical turn. A love song, an old German fable, and a childsong are quoted--"Das Röslein auf der Haiden."

Aus der mündlichen Sage:

Es sah ein Knabe ein Röslein stehn,
Röslein auf der Haiden;
Sah, es war so frisch und schön,
Und blieb stehn es anzusehn,
Und stand in süßen Freuden:
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth,
Röslein auf der Haiden!

Der Knabe sprach: ich breche dich,
Röslein auf der Haiden!
Röslein sprach: ich steche dich,
Dass du ewig denkst an mich,
Dass ich's nicht will leiden
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth,
Röslein auf der Haiden.

Doch der wilde Knabe brach
Das Röslein auf der Haiden;
Röslein wehrte sich und stach,
Aber er vergass darnach
Beim Genuss das Leiden.
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth,
Röslein auf der Haiden.

Herder appealed to the German poets to follow the example of Percy in England, assuring them that Germany also had its "Volkslieder, Provenzial-lieder, Bauernlieder" in the untaught rounds of the country folk of all its provinces. The question was only who would

collect them. However, not to collect simply to see them collected! Herder closes the essay with an expression of sorrow over the common style to which the German ballad had been reduced, in the place of the earlier dignified rendering of the noble and sacred form. He wanted the German lyric art to return to the former treatment of simple subjects, so that it might be freed from the often oppressive ornamentation that had recently become the rule:

"Irre ich mich, oder ist's wahr, dass die schoensten lyrischen Stücke, die wir schon jetzt haben und langst gehabt haben, schon mit diesen männlichen, starken, festen deutschen Ton über einkommen oder sich ihm nahern? -- Was wäre nicht also von der Aufweckung mehrere solcher zu hoffen!"

In 1765 Raspe, in a criticism of "Percy's relics of ancient English poetry" that had just appeared, calls the editor "einen Mann von grossem Geschmack, nicht weniger Einsicht in die Kritik, und einem unermüdlichem Fleisse in der Entdeckung der alten poetischen Geschichte seines Vaterlandes." He praises the Relics^{us} as a collection of songs that depict nature in its truest colors; songs that are sure to please, even though they may appear strange at times. Raspe also expressed the wish that a German art critic, equal to the Englishman in application, may be found, so that a collection of German folk-songs might be forthcoming. Thus, the existence of the material being certain, the gain to German poetry would be immeasurable. Raspe also calls attention to Percy's "treatise of the English stage", a document of value to art critics because it proves that the "rules" of the mysteries, the moralities, masks, histories, comedies and

tragedies coexisted with and were equivalent to the French "rules" of the drama. Raspe, to prove this point, quotes from Percy some ballads as examples, such as in Number I: Chevy Chase, Sir Cauline, King Estmere, Child of Elle, Launcelot, Alcanzor and Zaida; in Number II: Rosamond, Pasquil, The battle of Agincourt, etc.; in Number III: Gloggerion, The Lady turned serving man, Child Waters, George Barnwell.

I. Sir Cauline

In Ireland, ferr over the sea
There dwelled a bonnye kinge,
And with him a young and comelye Knighte,
Men call him Sir Cauline.

The Kinge had a ladye to his daughter,
In fashion she hath no peere;
And princely wightes that ladye wooed
To be theyr wedded feere. * * *

II. Fair Rosamond

When as King Henry ruled the land
The second of that name,
Besides the Quene, he dearly lovde
A fair and comely dame.

Most peerlesse was her beautye founde,
Her favour, and her face;
A sweeter creature in this worlde
Could never prince embrace. * * *

III. Lady turned serving-man

You beauteous ladyes, great and small,
I write unto you one and all,
Whereby that you may understand
What I have suffered in the land.

I was by birth a lady faire
An ancient barons only heire,
And when my good old father died,
Then I became a young Knightes bride. * *

The significance of Raspe's favorable comment is heightened by the fact that he added as models two translations from the Reliques: "Fair Rosamond" and "The Shepherd's Resolution". Even though these free translations were anything but a success, failing as they did to convey the beauty of the originals, they nevertheless called the attention of the German public to this epoch-making literary event, so that subsequently the English text of "Fair Rosamond" served as a model for Herder's ballad of the same name, the only one chosen by him out of the entire collection.

Die schone Rosemunde

^{im}
Ewst herrscht' ein Koenig, in der Zahl
Heinrich der zweit' er hiess
Der liebte, nebst der Koeniginn,
Ein Fräulein hold und süß.

Ihres gleichen war auf Erden nicht
An Liebreiz und Gestalt;
Kein süßes Kind war auf der Welt
In eines Mann's Gewalt. * * *

Raspe deserves credit also for recognizing that the serious ballad was destined to be more than an innovation of the burlesque; that it would ultimately cause its disappearance. It was his sincere desire that his countrymen should learn to appreciate the true dignity and the real nature of the ballad from this collection of short songs that to him were equal to those of Ariosto and Tasso, hoping that they would choose these for models rather than the "Mordsgeschichten" and "Bankelsange". There was indeed good reason to wish for a collection of German Hero-songs in order to prove that German forebears of chivalric

times were not behind their neighbours in the art of poetry any more than in other things. In his ballad "Hermin und Gunilde", a story of chivalry, Raspe proceeded to show what could be done in this way. It was the first attempt to introduce into romantic poetry the serious, noble elements of feeling. Unfortunately Raspe's poetic talent was not equal to his critical insight--; he could therefore not hope to supply the perfect model so sorely needed. Fully aware of his own shortcomings he appealed to Herder to continue in his search after old songs, so that old German traditions as well as new apt events might furnish material for history and poetry.

By this time Percy's Reliques were attracting comment from other German poets. Gerstenberg, challenging his readers to collect similar German songs, quotes "Cupid's pastime" as worthy of comparison with the most beautiful remnants of Greek antiquity in its tender turn and refined invention.

C. H. Schmidt believes that, if the venerable German bards were resurrected, their manly voices would be listened to with reverent awe; that, if valuable old treasures of German poetry were found, new poets would arise worthy of comparison with the old English bards.

These discussions soon bore fruit, as seen in the extracts from Percy's Reliques in German translation, containing eleven ballads.

The Child of Elle
Harpalus
Cupid's Pastime
Loyalty Confined
Love Will Find Out a Way
The Spanish Lady's Love
Winifreda
Bryan and Pereene
Alcanzar and Zaida

Lucy and Colin
Margaret's Ghost

Cupid's Pastime Davison 1621

1. It chanc'd of late a shepherd swain,
That went to seek his straying sheep,
Within a thicket on a plain
Aspi'd a dainty nymph asleep.
2. Her golden hair o'erspread her face;
Her careless arms abroad were cast;
Her pillow had her pillows place;
Her breast lay bare to every blast.
3. The shepherd stood and gaz'd his fill;
Nought durst he do; nought durst he say;
Whilst chance, or else perhaps his will,
Did guide the God of love that way.
14. Though mountains meet not, lovers may:
(last) What other lovers do, did they:
The love of God sat on a tree,
And laught that pleasant sight to see.

It was not until 1790, however, that a complete copy of Percy's first edition of 1765 appeared, proving conclusively that until this time the English edition had served as a model to all who had occupied themselves with Percy's ballads. It had so far been difficult to impart to these translations the breath of poetry inherent in the originals. At this time Herder alone seemed qualified to interpret the poetry of the ballad, due to his intimate acquaintance with Shakespeare and Ossian, and with oriental poetry. His soul had been touched by the word as well as the music of the ballad, but it is more than probable that the idea of a collection and publication of his folk-songs was suggested by the challenge of Raspe and Gerstenberg. During his stay in Strassburg in 1770-71 he occupied himself much with trans-

lations from old-English ballads, their success being due to his realization that the song--the sound--are inseparable from living poetry. He knew that the success of translation rested on this principle, that translation without tone quality was dead. Many translators had been shipwrecked on these shoals.

Herder's stay at Strassburg proved a blessing to German poetry. His desire to awaken an interest in folksong among the members of his set resulted in the cooperation of some of the younger poets; Goethe who was one of them said that Herder opened up a new vista to him in poetry, having until then only known it in a very different way. The study of Hebrew poetry, folk poetry, and the oldest records of poetry as suggested by Herder, proved the art of poetry to be a world bequest, not a private heritage of a few highly educated men. Goethe drank in eagerly all that Herder offered so generously; this interesting intercourse of two great minds, one of them just unfolding, was Goethe's contribution of twelve folksongs, collected by himself on his wanderings in the Alsace, and carried around with him as a treasure near his heart. At Herder's suggestion Goethe also took up the study of Percy's Reliques, finding, however, that the "Reliques" and "Ossian" left very different impressions with him. The elegance of rhythm in the English ballad was far removed from the wild unevenness of meter and the uncultured expression of the Scotch Ossian. Herder saw in the "Reliques" with its verses of strong emotion a marked resemblance to the powerful Greek music before the invention of the art of harmony;--inspiring him, they touched his soul. To reason about them was im-

possible for him; this may explain the delay of the publication of his translations.

The year 1773 was one of great significance for German literature. Klopstock had finished his *Messias*; Goethe brought out his *Goetz von Berlichingen*, Burger his *Leonore*; Herder was writing his essay on "Ossian and the songs of ancient people", which proved to have a far reaching influence. Following Raspe and Gerstenberg, he discussed some of Percy's ballads, adding some translations; the most important of these were "Edward, Edward", "Sweet William's Ghost", and "Love will find out the way."

Wilhelm's Geist

Da kam ein Geist zu Gretchen's Thür,
Mit manchem Weh und Ach!
Und drückt am Schloss und kehrt am Schloss
Und ächzte traurig nach.

Ist dies mein Vater Philipp?
Oder ist's mein Bruder Johann?
Oder ist's mein Treulieb Wilhelm
Aus Schottland kommen an? * *

Weg der Liebe

Part I Über die Berge,
 Über die Wellen,
 Unter den Grabern,
 Unter den Quellen,
 Über Fluthen und Seen,
 In der Abgrunde Steg,
 Über Felsen, über Hohen
 Find't Liebe den Weg! * *

Part II Den gordischen Knoten
 Den Liebe sich band,
 Kann brechen, kann lösen
 Ihn sterbliche Hand?
 Was müht ihr, was siemet

Ihr listigen Zweck?
Durch was ihr beginnet
Find't Liebe den Weg. * *

During this time Herder's essay "The Resemblance of the Middle English and German Poetry" appeared, showing that in their nature the English and German ballad are essentially one. Rhymes, turns, favorite expressions, meter, the entire "Wurf" are the same in both. The essay in a way announces his own collection of the "Volkslieder" which at last were published in 1779. In the preface Herder confesses that the English folksongs formed his starting point, as they are the final point to which he returns. Stimulated by this essay, August Friedrich Ursinus, like Burger, edited in 1777 a collection of ballads and songs similar to the old English and old Scotch poetic species. The cooperation of Eschenburg did much to further their success; it was he who introduced the collection by two historical literary treatises, translated from the English "About the Old English Minstrels", from the first volume of the Reliques, and "About Song-poetry, from the essays of Song-Writing, with a collection of such English songs as are most eminent for poetical merit". In this connection were some that had been formerly published.

Margaret's Ghost
Lucy and Colin
The Shepherd's Resolution

The last of these three, and "Lord Thomas", show the excellence of Eschenburg's translations, true to the original in tone and dignity. But where the poet, like Raspe, omits the rhyme the result is unbearably sober, even trivial.

The collection of Ursinus certainly attracted considerable attention and literary comment. Möser expressed vivid regret that Germany had no such reliques to offer, saying that he would prefer them to the bones of the eleven thousand virgins at Cologne. August Hermann Niemayer of the University of Halle read from this collection to his large classes, trusting by this method to guide the taste of the students in the desired direction. The chief significance of the Ursinus collection was that it presented for the convenient use of the public a compilation of material that had previously been scattered. But it could in no way compare with the "Volkslieder" of Herder, a much more complete collection of powerful and far-reaching influence, destined to bring about the final victory for the true poetry of the people. That this victory was not won easily is shown in the criticisms of such opponents of the folksong as Ramler and Nicolai who, like Hölty, considered the ballad far beneath their dignity. However, the spirit of the time pointed in the right direction and the opposing voices were finally silenced by ever growing numbers of translations.

The "Poems" of Bürger that came out soon after Herder's "Volkslieder" are free translations to the extent that they might pass for his own work--and indeed he was not unwilling that they should--the subject matter alone pointing to their origin. They stand on the very borderline of free translation and imitation. Among these were "The Child of Elle", called "Die Entführung" by Bürger, and set to music by Zumsteg. "The Friar of Orders Gray" is presented as "Bruder

Graurock" and "The Passionate Shepherd" as "Schiefer's Liebeswerbung". Some verses of each of the poems are quoted to give an idea of Bürger's style; comparing them with the English version, it becomes very evident that Bürger did not hold closely to the original in any way.

Bruder Graurock und die Pilgerin

Ein Pilgermadel, jung und schoen,
Wallt auf ein Kloster zu.
Sie zog das Glöcklein an dem Thor;
Ein Bruder Graurock trat hervor,
Halb barfuss ohne Schuh.

Sie sprach: "Gelobt sie Jesus-Christ!"
"Zu Ewigkeit! sprach er.
Gar wunderseltzam ihm geschah;
Und als er ihr in's Auge sah,
Da schlug sein Herz noch mehr. * *

It was a friar of orders gray
Walked forth to tell his beades;
And he met with a lady faire
Clad in a pilgrime's weedes.

Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar,
I pray thee tell to me,
If ever at yon holy shrine
My true love thou didst see. * *

Die Entführung

1. "Knapp', saddle mir mein Dänen ross,
Das ich mir Ruh' erbeite!
Es wird mir hier zu eng im Schöss;
Ich will und muss in's Weite!"
So rief der Ritter Karl in Hast;
Voll Augst und Ahndung, sonder Rast.
Es schien ihn fast zu plagen,
Als hätt'er wem erschlagen.

2. Er sprengte, dass es Funken stob,
Hinunter von dem Hofe;
Und als er kamm den Blick erhob,
Sie da, Gertruden's Zofe!
Zusammen schrack der Ritters mann;

Es packt ihn wie mit Krallen an
Und schüttelt ihn wie Fieber
Hinüber und herüber. * *

1. On yonder wall a castle standes
With walles and towres bedight,
And yonder lives the Child of Elle
A younge and comelye Knighte.
2. The Child of Elle to his garden went,
And stood at his garden pale,
When, lo! he beheld fair Emmeline's page
Come trippinge down the dale.
2. The Child of Elle, he hyed him thence
Y-wishe stood not stille
And soone he met fair Emmeline's page
Come climbing up the hille.

In 1780-81 Bodmer edited his "Old-English Ballads with Additions of Fragments of the Old-Swabian Period and Poems". He said that the merit of these songs was like that of a frank, open-hearted man who, in his simplicity of thought which is identical with feeling, thinks and feels the thoughts that issue from his primitive conception. Bodmer hoped that the many traits of sincerity, kindness of heart, honesty and humanity contained in the ballad would be appreciated, and that the difference existing between the naive and the common would be recognized, since the common is often made up of trivial and vulgar suggestions, and even more often of plebeian wit or still more plebeian word-abuse. Bodmer's collection was composed of 38 translations from Percy's ballads, exceeding in number all previous ones, but not equalling that of Herder in artistic significance, nor that of Ursinus with its excellent Eschenburg translations. Twenty-

five of these translations were contained in the first volume of 1780. They all belong to the realm of the people; Bodmer's selection successfully avoided all that was artificial and trivial, as indicated in the following list:

1. Koenig Liar
2. Der Kleine Musgrave
3. Der Mantel der Keuschheit
4. Koenig Westmar, ein Spielman
5. Waters
6. Der Mönch vom grauen Orden
7. Patrik Spense
8. Das Kind in Ziehbrunnen
9. Die Kinder in dem Wald
10. Der Landstörzer
11. Glosgerion
12. Der Mantel mit Barten beligt
13. Des Schulzen Tochter zu Islington
14. Barbara Elle
15. Das Schaferkind
16. Der Geäffte Ritter
17. Die Pilgerin
18. Die Schoene Ellinor
19. Gaweens Heyrath
20. Gordon
21. Gawlin
22. Robin von Partingal
23. Der Diener, der zur Koenigin wird
24. Ser Stiefemutter Grausamkeit
25. Koenig Edward und der Gerber

But Bodmer was not always fortunate in the choice of his meter, as the following verse from "Patrik Spense" will prove:

In Dumferlie sass der Koenig zu Tisch
Das Fleisch war niedlich, der Wein blutrot:
Wer kennet einen geschickten Schiffer
Der trotzet den Sturm in dem segelten Boot?

A comparison with the original text will show the monotony of Bodmer's verse:

The King sits in Dumferling-towne
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
O where will I get a guid sailor
To sail this ship of mine?

The second volume, edited in 1781, is made up altogether of selections from Percy, thirteen in all; they are:

1. Emmelyne
2. Die schoene Rosemunde
3. Die schoene Margareth und der süsse William
4. Des süssen William's Geist
5. Der Koenigin Eleanora Beichte
6. Her Thomas und die schoene Nannet
7. Der Mord des Koenigs der Schotten
8. Des Bettler's Tochter
9. Die geduldige Göttin
10. Die Wäldschützen
11. Der Abt von Kantelburg
12. Der Erbe von Sinne
13. Robin Hood

The quiet narrative style of Bodmer adapts itself well to idyllic passages in some of these old poems, enhancing their beauty, as for instance:

An einem der längsten Tage in Jahr,
Unter den Schatten am grunenden Hag
Sass beisammen ein liebendes Parr;
Die schwätzten den langen Sommertag.

Sie hatten nicht alles gesagt was sie wollten,
Als ihnen die Nacht zu scheiden gebot;
Zu scheiden tath weh dem liebenden Paar,
Da sprach William zu der schoenen Margot:-

One verse in the original is equivalent to these two above.

As it fell out on a long summer's day
Two lovers they sat on a hill;
They sat together that long summer's day
And could not talk their fill.

Herder's work far surpasses all others on account of his unusual ability of linguistic expression perfected by practice. He

came nearer than any other to rendering "All das dunkle Unnenbare das uns mit dem Gesange in die Seele fliasset". The less experienced translators failed to convey it; they lacked the pliability, the art of sympathetic interpretation, the sensitive appreciation of the peculiarities of language that make the great translator. Herder, however, was not satisfied with his translations of the folksongs, and considered any criticism justified, saying that no one could find any fault in them, of which he himself was not keenly conscious. This may account for his delay of their publication. Comparing the versions of some of the poems translated in 1773 with those in print, changes and corrections are quite frequently found. For instance:

Wilhelm's Geist 1773

Dein Hand und Pfand geb ich Dir nicht
S'wird nimmer Dein Gewinn
Bis dass Du kommst in mein Gemach
Und Küss'st mein Mund und Kinn.

1778

Dein Wort und Treu geb ich Dir nicht
Gehs nimmer wieder dir
Bis Du in meine Kammer kommst
Mit Liebeskuss zu mir.

The translation of "Young Waters" of 1773 follows the original closely:

Sie nahmen Young Waters, zwangen ihm
in Ketten Fuss und Hand
Sie nahmen den Jüngling, sie zwangen ihn ein
Wo ihn Kein Taglicht fand.

1778

Sie rissen ihn, sie zwangen ihm,
In Ketten Fuss und Hand;
Sie rissen ihn, sie zwangen ihn
Wo ihn kein Taglicht fand.

The 10th verse of "Die schoene Rosemunde" shows in the version of 1773 a decidedly naive construction, while that of 1778 is more artistic:

1773

Doch ach das Glück das lächelt jetzt,
So bald ergrimmt es sich!
Gar bald schwand unser Koenigs Lust
Und's Fräulein's Ruhe wich

1778

Doch ach, das Glück das oft ergrimmt,
Wo es zuvor gelacht,
Beneidet bald des Koenigs Lust
Und Rös'chen's Liebespracht.

Each of the succeeding years added to the number of translations and "imitations" found either in periodicals or in private editions. A second volume of Burger's poems came out in 1789. The Voss Almanack of 1790 brought out a German version of the ballad, "Take thy Cloak about Thee" and the "Robin-Good-Fellow" both by Voss. This same publication contained "The Braes of Jarrow" by v. Halem, "The Jealousy of the Mind" by E.M.Kuh, and Haug's "Love will find out the way", as well as the translation of v. Miller's "The passionate Shepherd" which had been published before. Still another collection "Volkslieder, nebst untermischten anderen Stücken", identical in title with that of Herder, came out in 1795, prefaced by the author F. H. Bothe, as if to justify his enterprise. "Folk-poetry", he said, "taking the word in its proper interpretation, is the most sublime of all poetry. Its chief object, great important truths and events. The great thinkers of all times loved it; its greatest poets were

always the most popular".

Bothe's collection contains 28 ballads after Percy:

1. Der Todes Sieg
2. Die Chevy jagd
3. Mein Sinn est mir ein Koenigreich
4. Die goldene Mittelstrasse
5. Herr Kalin
6. Der Ritter von Elle
7. Das Knäblein mit dem Mantel
8. Herrn Gabins Hochzeit
9. Der schoene Unbekannte
10. William and Fanny
11. Herr Aldingar
12. Die FeenKoenigin
13. Robert Gutfrueud
14. Graf Walter
15. Der verliebte Schäfer an sein Liebchen
16. Des Mädchen's Antwort
17. Das Fräulein aus Spanien
18. Guter Schäfer, sage mir.
19. Der Pilgrim und der Reisende
20. Amor's Kurzweil
21. Angelika, eine Ballade
22. Valentin und Ursin
23. Die Kinder im Walde
24. Die in einen Dieuer verwandelte Lady
25. Der Mönch und die Pilgerin
26. Admiral Hosier's Geist
27. Bryan und Perine
28. Der Ritter unt der langen Nase, oder Weiberlist.

These translations, far more artistically rendered than those of Bodmer, are by Bothe himself, with three exceptions. The first of these is the "Lady, die in einen Dieuer verwandelt wird", signed here for the first time by Merck; the second one is Miller's well known "Verliebter Schäfer", and the third one is Burger's "Graf Walter" with some slight alterations by Bothe for the sake of greater truth to the original. It is to be regretted that Bothe failed in this attempt; it should not have been a difficult task to improve a few imperfect passages of a work that, on the whole, came very near the

original text in simplicity and straightforward treatment. It was chiefly a question of technical ability. To illustrate this point the three versions are quoted:

Original: Child Waters in his stable stood
And stroakt his milk-white steed:
To him a fayre young lady came
As ever ware woman's weed.

Burger: Graf Walter rief am Marstallthor:
Knapp, schwämm und Kämm mein Ross!
Da trat ihn an die schoenste Maid
Die je ein Graf genoss.

Bothe: Graf Walther stund in seinem Stall
Und strich sein milch-weiss Ross
Da trat ihn an die schoenste Maid
Die je ein Graf genoss.

Even though Bothe succeeded in bringing the first two lines nearer to the original text, he failed in the last two--evidently not capable of finding any rhyme but "Ross: genoss". Bothe's collection, which does not include anything truly German, is the last one of the noteworthy collections at the close of the century.

The year 1801 brought the publication of S. G. Kosegarten's collection of translations, eight of these by himself are considered the best among literary translations. Word, meter and sense are truthfully rendered, retaining the original character, as is shown in the quotation from "Hosier's Geist":

1. Spanien's Heersmacht war geschlagen.
Neben Porto-Bello lag
Triumphierend Englands Flotte;
Heiss und glorreich war der Tag.
Vernon cum und seine Braven

Ruhten nach der schwülen Schlacht;
Wimpel strömten, Becherklängen,
Siegs geschrei durch scholl die Nacht.

2. Plötzlich gelbt ein grässlich Henlen
Aus der dunklen Flut hervor;
Geister schwärzten, grau'nvoll wimmernd,
Rechts und links und rings empor.
Statt der Leichentücher
Hängematter jeden ein.
Jeder schein mit scheelen Blicken
Porto-Bello zu bedräu'n.

Herder believed that in Kosegarten a man had appeared who had ventured into the field of lyric art with great success, making the language serve him in the utmost degree, dominating through it like a master mind, making use of its abundance, its wealth and harmony cleverly and yet so naturally that the effect is surprising and fascinating.

Kosegarten's eight translations are:

1. Das Lied vom Weidenbaum
2. Das Lied von Sir Patrik Spense
3. Die Judentochter
4. Das Lied vom edlen Murray
5. Das Nussbranne Mädchen
6. Die Romanze von Barbara Allen
7. O Jammer, Jammer
8. Hosier's Geist.

It may be interesting to compare the following verse of "Sir Patrik Spense" in the original, with Herder and with Kosegarten:

Make haste, make haste, my mirry men all
Our guid ship sails the morn.
O say na sae, my master deir
For I fear a deadlie storm.

Herder: Macht fort, macht fort, mein' wackre Leut'
Unser gut Schiff segelt morgen.
O sprecht nicht so, mein lieber Herr
Da sind wir sehr in Sorgen.

Kosegarten: Nun rührt euch Bursche, rührt euch frisch
Wir stehen morgen in See.
Da sei Gott vor, Herzliebster Herr!
Es brächt uns Angst und Weh.

In 1805 Haug presented in his Epigrams and mixed Poems, Vol. II, thirteen translations, among them the "Bailiff's daughter of Islington". Some of these translations are in short five syllable trochaic verse without rhyme, which in itself is not successful, even though the language is apt enough. Haug followed the example of some of the lyric poets of the Renaissance in introducing abstract ideas like "love" by equivalent gods of Greek mythology. Consequently Haug registers a step backward in the attempt to familiarize the German people with Percy's Reliques. However, only two out of the 13 translations deserve the name of folksong: "Barbara Ellen" and the "Bailiff's daughter". In order to give an idea of Haug's rather conventional and artificial style, one verse of the latter poem is quoted beside the original:

Yet she was coy, and would not believe
That he did love her so;
No, nor at any time should shee
Any countenance to him showe.* *

Haug: Sie glaubt dem feinen Gekose
Der stattlichen Erben nie,
Log Sprödigkeit, ach! und hehlte
Der Herzens Sympathie. * *

Even one verse is sufficient to show that Haug's manner was not suited to the Volkslied.

The Musen-Almanach of Chamisso and Varnhagen of 1806, and that of Seckendorf of the following two years, brought out further translations, mostly unsigned, but supposedly by Seckendorf himself.

Among these were:

The Rising in the North
King Arthur's Death
Alcanzor and Zayda
Gentle River
The Jew's Daughter
Edward, Edward
Sir Patrik Spense
Child Waters

It may be interesting to consider for a moment the influence of the folksongs on German plays. In 1777 Wieland completed his "Singspiel Rosemund" which was based on Percy's ballad of the same name. It serves as a good example of the dramatic use of the "Reliques" even though it is a well known fact that the ballad can scarcely be made to serve satisfactorily the much larger dimensions of the stage. In 1776 a tragedy appeared, called "Adeston und Ros'chen, with songs by Schenk, and in 1790 a drama in four acts by Speyer, entitled "Karl von Eschenhorst und Fraulein Gertrude von Hochburg." "Rosamunde" a drama by Th. Koerner, came out in 1811. "Erwin und Elmire" was the name given to the drama by Goethe, making use of the plot of the "Friar of the Orders Gray", while Tieck used the same ballad for his "Zerbino". Ursinus had recognized the value of the ballad as a source of dramatic material. His opinion was based on the resemblance between the ballads of Lear, and of the Jew of Venice, and the plays of the same name by Shakespeare. This view was supported by Lessing. There, indeed, was rich material for

the young dramatic poets, and, as Ursinus expressed it: "Wie wäre es nun wenn ich dem jungen, dramatischen Dichter alle die alten Balladen und Legenden, die uns noch von den minstrels, alle die Romanzen, welche uns von den Troubadours übrig geblieben sind, zur fleissigen Lektüre anriete? zum Studio empföhle? Ich dachte das wäre so unrecht wohl nicht! Er würde gewiss ~~hie~~ und da noch ganz neue, höchst wahrscheⁱnliche und interessante Situationen zu ganzen Stücken finden, oft, und bis-~~weilen~~ wo er's am wenigsten vermutete, die auffallendsten, vortrefflichsten Gruppen zu einzelnen Scenen".

This brief record of the introduction of the folksong into Germany covers a period of forty years, beginning with the first translation from Percy, and leading up to the time when Germany became conscious of her own inherent treasures. Herder saw in the Reliques not only the remnants of a foreign folk-poetry, but the stimulus for a new German folk-lyric. Had he lived longer, he would have had the satisfaction of seeing his hopes realized. But the soil prepared by him brought forth a magnificent collection of folksongs between 1806-08; the "Volkslieder" of Arium und Brentano, a product of the romantic spirit so prevalent at that time.

The notes of "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" reached all German lands. This was a magic call, awakening a many-voiced echo, eagerly listened to by the German people and accepted with enthusiasm and deep feeling. Arium and Brentano proceeded naturally with their work, like Percy with his collection, but, nevertheless, paving the way for the great historical collection of Ludwig Uhland "Alt und Nieder-

deutsche Volkslieder", which was published in 1845. Other collections of national folksongs soon followed--poets were no longer compelled to leave their native soil for models.

Posterity will know but little of the untiring efforts of Herder in behalf of the folksong and even less of the foreign models that inspired him. If the old English and Scotch songs still claim some attention it is rather due to the typically German desire to get acquainted with foreign literature than to an appreciation of their historical significance for German literature. But the awakening of the German consciousness is due to the emphasis laid by Herder on the collection of folksongs, even though he called his first collection: "ein hand voll Wasser gegen über einem nachbarlichem Gastmahl von Fülle und Wohlstand." In the preface to this collection he stressed the great need of collecting the songs of the people: "Nur jetzt, nur jetzt! Die Reste aller lebendigen Volksdenkeit rollen mit beschleunigtem, letztem Sturze in den Abgrund der Vergessenheit hinab!" And later again he sent out the imploring appeal: "Grosses Reich, Reich von zehn Völkern, Deutschland! Du hast keinen Shakespeare, hast du auch keine Gesänge deiner Vorfahren, deren du dich rühmen koenntest? Schweizer, Schwaben, Franken, Bayern, Westfaler, Sachsen, Wenden, Preussen, ihr habt allesammt nichts?" His appeal was answered, and undreamed of treasures were revealed, equal in beauty and strength to Percy's Reliques. The poets after Herder, first among them Uhland, appreciated the intrinsic value of the folksong, realizing that its directness, spontaneity, force would keep fresh the close bond with nature, the source of a people's strength.

Even Percy failed to see this as clearly; the learned bishop offered in his preface to the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" an apology for the crudeness of some of the songs in his collection: "In a polished age, like the present, I am sensible that many of these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them. Yet have they, for the most part, a pleasant simplicity, and many artless graces, which in the opinion of no mean critics have been thought to compensate for the want of higher beauties and, if they do not dazzle the imagination, are frequently found to interest the heart. To atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems each volume concludes with a few modern attempts in the same kind of writing: and to take off from the tediousness of the longer narratives, they are everywhere intermingled with little elegant pieces of the lyric kind. Select ballads in the old Scottish dialect, most of them of the first rate merit, are also interspersed among those of our ancient English minstrels; and the artless production of these old rhapsodies are occasionally confronted with specimens of the compositions of contemporary poets of a higher class, of those who had all the advantages of learning in the times in which they lived, and who wrote for fame and posterity. Yet perhaps the palm will be frequently due to the old strolling minstrels who composed their rhymes to be sung to their harps, and who looked no farther than for present applause and present subsistence."

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